

title: contemporary eden; the transmigration of paradise tales, into edenic architectures today

Stephanie Casha Vida

Ongoing thesis from Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura,
Av. Juan de Herrera
e-mail: stephaniecashavida@gmail.com

Abstract

This document proceeds from the research for my doctoral thesis titled Eden; Tale, Image and Project.

This thesis is about the subject of Eden or paradise in architecture, to understand its concepts and be able to generate a general model to generate architecture that places us in a virtual way in paradisiacal places, in holidays as well as in daily life. It also seeks to build a system of measure to be used to turn into Eden the previously non “Edenic”. A comparative measuring system to know where we are in relation to how much Eden is present in places to intervene, or project.

The zones of the thesis that are related to this congress are those related to the use of this tale, idea and image of the collective unconscious, when it comes to projecting a place that locates us physically, mentally and in our mood in paradise.

Introduction:

The quantity of Eden

The concept of Eden comes from a biblical myth, that tells about the origin of the steps of man on earth. This cradle, primary uterus cradles man with very specific environmental parameters. These parameters are exclusively related with sensations of security, wellbeing and timelessness. These parameters are perfectly measurable study sensitive and generate architecture in many ways. Also, examples and living proofs of this occurring are disseminated on beaches and gardens all over the world, with various formats that “Edenize” the territory.

The objective of the ongoing thesis that this paper comes from is to establish the structural essentials to reproduce this Eden or to “transmigrate it” to built reality. Architecture is the only multisensory experience that can vividly reproduce this place, this living place. Also it is the objective to open up new paths of procedure to reach what is a common objective, in architecture for tourism, and hopefully in everyday architecture, this possibility leading to have and enjoy of “perfect” dwelling conditions for humans.

This concept of architecture in the past has been built into palaces, gardens and sometimes even religious buildings. In the contemporary world since a date I place in 1969, which is an intermediate year between the Boeing 737 and 767, the decade in which airports begin to be very special logistic sites, the first link of ARPANET, internet between Stanford and UCLA, and the first travel to the moon. This date is the approximate turning point or birth date of contemporary Adam and Eves, that now can see the earth from the skies (and thus have the certainty that many places can truly be Eden) and search paradise within themselves (it is the year of the flourishing of the Hippie concept and

rising of contraculture, and the search for transcendence to other realities through the doors of perception, opened by drugs and music), and along all beautiful beaches, natural reserves and protected open spaces all over the world, being able to fly to them at ever descending costs. From protected airport gate to protected airport gate, as if crossing interdimensional gates to other worlds.

The Tale of Eden:

Eden as an archetype, and how the behavior of this reality makes it possible for us to revive it in physical reality.

The basis over where this thesis and paper is developed comes for the Jungian concepts of myth, symbol, archetype, psique, unconscious and collective unconscious. These concepts are basic to understand the conceptual construction that is developed in this paper. A myth is a popular tradition or tale that is used by the individual to connect to mystery, to that which is not understood. These myths serve as a support where archetypes dwell and reveal their nature. In fact, archetypes were “discovered” by Jung because all cultures have myths in which these archetypes are revealed, and are common between cultures where no communication or cultural similarity exist. These archetype images live in the human unconscious and proceed from the collective unconscious, this level containing all the layers of experience that mankind has accumulated in centuries walking the path existing between our first steps as animals, where no difference from us and nature existed, to what we are now, rational and “separated” from nature, or at least as such we perceive ourselves. *“These archetypal images are as instinctive as the capacity of birds to migrate (in formation); as ant’s (capacity) to live in organized societies; as the dance of sideways movement of bees to communicate the rest of the swarm the exact position of a source of food”*(C. G. Jung, El Hombre y sus simbolos 1995 p.68, personal translation)

Symbols are the expressions we use to represent complex concepts that we can’t define or fully understand. Religions are full of symbols and images. This happens because as the verbal language is spoken and understood or not, the rest of the information is being received through the channel of the subconscious mind. Clearly this channel is of great use in a matter of faith as is religion, of believing in things that are invisible. The nature of perception, and the fact that in the perception of the exterior world a very important part is played by the mind, that filters and translates the phenomena occurring in the outside to a world that is happening inside us. As this happens, the way our mind processes the information is in some ways a mystery, different from individual to individual; *“inside the mind they are transformed into psychic events whose ultimate nature cannot be known (because the psique cannot know it’s own psychic matter. Therefore each experience contains an unlimited number of unknown factors)”* (C. G. Jung, El Hombre y sus simbolos 1995 p.21, personal translation).

It is clear that the myth of a previous time where man was in a closed garden, protected from all evil, is an archetype. The archetype in our immediate culture is the Garden of Eden, because the background where this is written from is a catholic Mediterranean culture, with other important

influences that have made possible the comparison. This is why the chosen myth for this paper is mainly Eden, and its symbols and archetypes are enough to develop the ideas enclosed in this fragment of the ongoing thesis.

Escaping from a childish interpretation of Eden, which escapes responsibility and choice, when we revive the garden now, choice and decision have a strong relevance. In fact if it works, it does with a very strong self sufficient spirit, translated to two important issues, finding the energy sources within the exact location where the garden is to be built or re-created, and finding the building materials in this same spot, this two premises being the pillars of self sufficient, sustainable, earth friendly construction. These revivals of Eden nowadays are found in touristic developments although the world, and in fact they are the models that have been used to examine the characteristics of Eden as they can be recovered today. The elements found in these developments are the ones being studied in this paper, and they are the fields where these sensations and deep memory revivals have been held and can be experimented.

The object of study in the paper and the thesis is on one hand the possibility, and on the other the physical proofs, nowadays built inside these touristic sites and developments of, through the gathering of the physical structural archetypes, to generate a space that will bring the users, through the doors of their perception to a place in their minds and souls where the final complete experience is that of being in Eden. Being this actually what touristic brochures and guides of different places sell to the travelers.

This experience has, like all of our experiences, to be first physical and then mental. This threshold (the mind realm) flanked when all of the symbolic elements are put together to work and finally are able to revive the complete archetype, inside the users' minds and souls, and at this point, the experience will be complete. The result of this transmigration being a complete immersion in the timeless womb of mankind.

This gives hotels and touristic resorts transcendence in the contemporary world that can give not only economic benefits, but also opens lines of study that link the past with the future and serve to build in general better environments for mankind, and being able to apply them with a simple method of adding up characteristics and rebuilding Eden like places.

The proof of this occurring, of being able to revive the experience of Eden in a particular place, under particular circumstances has to be that the tourist ends up knowing that they are in Eden, for example, having a timeless sensation of not knowing what day or time it is most of the time, being able to go about with few clothes, knowing that no harm will come upon them for they are being securely taken care of, and the exterior world doesn't have the possibility to enter to where they are happily resting. Tourists or contemporary Adams, have the absolute certainty that all of their needs will be met.

The concepts approached in this paper are a gathering of interpretations of the sources described in the last page, in order to build a theory. Indeed, as said before, these concepts have long been tested with, only in this thesis and paper the objective is to look at them through a different optic, and with an

architectural contemporary approach, reviewing classic concepts in order to make them work in a more efficient way, through the looking glass of touristic developments and the natural and developed characteristics of them.

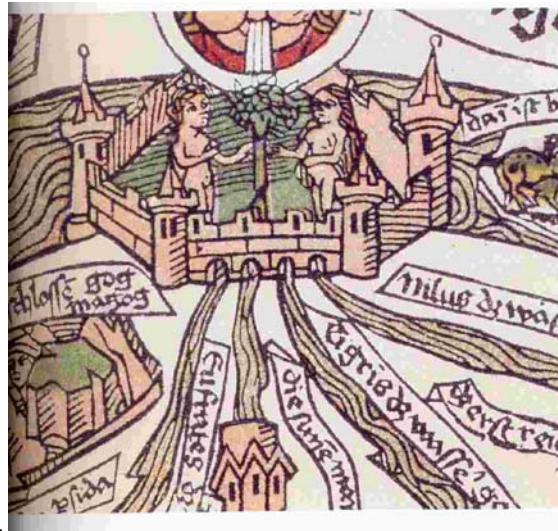


Fig. 1 World Map, Hanns Rüst, c.1480



Fig. 2 *Topographia paradisi terrestrii iuxta mentem et coniecturas authoris*, from his *Arca Noe*, Athanasius Kircher, c.1675. Both figures collected from: Scafi, Alessandro: *Mapping Paradise*.

Common Elements in Eden:

Which are the common elements for an Eden to be such? These elements and their significance, on one hand mythical on the other, the practical applications of each element. The elements of the project of Eden. These elements that will be accounted for next, have been taken first from the *Book of genesis*, and compared to actual architecture built from those concepts, built in the nowadays Gardens of Eden which are resorts and hotels all over the world.

The Walls:

As its own name says it, the Garden of Eden is a secluded space. This seclusion has several faces in the tale. First of all, you cannot monitor a particular space without having limits. In another line of thought, if you get kicked out, it must have walls to keep you out. In a practical way, this limited space can keep time out, and wisdom and evil. For the mere fact of having this absolute innocence, well being and safety conditions, the perimeter has to be well counted for.

Seeing it from another point of view and referring to Ken Wilber's explanation of Eden, which is that Eden in our brains is the reptile part of it, the cerebellum, which is the heirloom of a time when man couldn't separate himself from nature, the memories of the reptile brain. If we see the subject of these walls of Eden in this light, they are a metaphor of a different reality, not separated from the one we live in now physically but in terms of perception. Another dimension to be reached "through the doors of perception". When confronted to special stimuli like drugs, tantric sex, or religious ecstasy the individual can go beyond these walls and find what the unconscious kept secret in "Eden" or "paradise".

Every touristic development needs walls because they are normally of private ownership, the only way to know where it ends is that of having a wall, to keep non customers out. And the delights in.

The Gates: When we have walls surrounding a place there are two choices, either it is to keep the "outside" from entering, or to prevent that what is inside to come out. In the case of Eden, the reason is the first choice. In order to keep the "wild" outside (and to keep an eye that nothing evil happened to Adam and Eve) the garden had to have walls. It is unthinkable that all nature could be like Eden, at least when the book of Genesis was written. The important fact about this is whether this gates could be trespassed by Adam and Eve any time they wished. If what kept them in was their desire to dwell in the marvels of the garden, or their fear of the unknown, that was the outside. In any case, this gates, free to use or not, existed, and so they do in every construction that holds the body and soul of the Eden we carry around inside us.

In the contemporary world, we have in great esteem our freedom. The worst punishment in most of the world is to be deprived of liberty. To be kept inside an establishment with no freedom to leave it when desired.

Related to the idea in the previous segment, reaching this "place" of consciousness this level of experience opening our senses and using them in a combined way, is never easy. Religions all over the world have given their spiritual leaders the task of doing this, and then showing them what was beyond those gates. And shamans, ancient priests of polytheist religions, of religions related to nature have sought the way to look beyond the three dimensional world.

In any case gates are needed to reach Eden, physical gates and psychological gates. This threshold makes us consciously and unconsciously know that a new space, a secluded different space is reached, and under some special characteristics it might make our mind to pass a veil inside. This veil from "the outside world" where worries and work are to an inner world where time doesn't pass and

everything is safe, and we are protected, like a sanctuary may lead to a real rest, and a real comforting way of handling the “outer” world.

If doors don’t exist neither do hotels. You have to check in and out.

The Waters: in the tale from the Genesis four rivers start in the Garden of Eden, Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates. Water is vital. Water is life. In the Garden of Eden there was lots of it, but not from the rain, just from the rivers and a mist that came from earth.

These waters sustain the evergreen plants and calm the thirst of animals and of the inhabitants of Eden, also it is way to keep clean and refreshed. In ancient Egyptian gardens pools were essential, and they were allowed to take their complete gardens into the afterlife.

It is no wonder that Eden like places are usually relates to beaches, pools, rivers, lakes etc. In a reconstruction of Eden, in order to revive the symbol, water has to be present in two ways. First to drink and water plants, the second way is to be cleaned and bathe. This bathing activity symbolizes rebirth, cleaning the body, the mind and the soul. That is also why since ancient times terms and all sort of facilities are built around medical water fountainheads, rivers, beaches. Any resort or 4 or 5 star hotel needs at least a pool or two.

The Sacred Trees: The sacred trees are a symbol of the union between heaven and earth. The vertical elements since Mesopotamia through all history of religions hold that significance. This tree may be replaced with different names and forms, but the meaning is common. Roots, underworld, unconsciousness, trunk, the world we live in, three dimensional reality, branches and leaves, superior world, the sky, God.

To revive the symbols these trees ought to be in some way special, for example trees with a legend behind, trees with “magical” powers or at least with some degree of protection or a medical property. Also an orchard is needed. A “sacred” wood would be appropriate, because the “sacredness” and symbol are also archetypes. The nearer we come to archetypes the easier is to enter the symbolic realm, thus the depth of perception and attunement to Eden.

The Food: Foods in Eden doesn’t have to be cooked, or prepared or planted. It just grows on trees or plants that grow almost wildly (we have to remember the nature of Eden is of non wilderness, Someone is taking care of the events taking place inside the garden, the things that happen are of a controlled nature).

Actually the tale of the Genesis sounds very similar to hydroponic plantations, for example in Almeria. There is no rain, there are no seasons, and plants are watered from below, so they never get spoiled or frozen. Nutrients are controlled, as maturation is.

The common facts of this Eden food are that no work on the part of the eaters has to be done to have access to it. This is clearly reflected in concepts like full board, and buffet. And in the restaurants built inside and nearby hotels.

Another way to feed is to feed by fulfilling the senses. Borrowing this concept from the Arabic gardens developed from the interpretation of the concept of paradise in the Koran, in these gardens there had to be a fulfillment of the five senses. So these contemporary Gardens of Eden have to have, orchard (taste), strong colors (sight, chromo therapy), chimes, waters (hearing), textures to the hand and feet (touch), perfumed plants and earths (smell).

The Surveillance and Monitoring: The concept is clear although the way of getting the task done, clearly changes with the development of technology. There cannot be trespassers in Eden. There has to be an absolute certainty that no evil will take place inside the walls of the enclosure. No person will be disturbed, no animal, no plant. Everything inside has only to worry about being beautiful and blooming.

The Lack of Clothes: in Eden no clothing is needed because the climate doesn't request it. Nowadays the international panorama of laws regarding nudity is getting to a point where nudity is legal, at least in public beaches. In fact even if inside private vacation complexes some clothing is needed and requested as part of the internal rules and social rules, the quantity of clothing needed to reach social standards is little. This fact relates even more contemporary times with the tale of Eden. Actually one of the last acts in the expulsion of Adam and Eve was to clothe them, as if they had to go back to the cold of the "outer world".

Clearly, Eden is a private place, just for two innocent souls who know each other very well, and are very comfortable showing their skin. A place to transmigrate Eden to, has to be the least crowded it can, and the people in it, have to be mindful not to crowd or disturb the other dwellers.

Weather Conditions: A tropical climate is described in the Genesis. Actually it describes some sort of hot house, with no rain and a warm vapor that waters the orchard. This opens two lines of thought. The first one and the one we are developing here is the tropical element of Eden. The other being, is this garden really outdoors? This theme will be developed in *The Tropics and Paradise*.

The Timelessness: There is no time in Eden. One of the retired gifts from God at the time of the expulsion from Eden was immortality.

Of course this not passing of time has a lot to do with no seasons, and no weathering. No leaves fall from trees, no pruning, no harvest, and of course no growing old for the dwellers. This may seem an unconventional concept to relate to architecture, but the fact is that today more than ever medicine has made giant advances in this way, including sicknesses that at first killed, now are put to sleep with medicine. The human race today is nearer to Adam, Eve (and Lilith) than it ever was in history.

Pacific Beautiful Animals: When nature is generous and fertile, flocks of beautiful birds gather peacefully in it. Schools of fish swim around gracefully and other sea and land animals come close curiously because no fear of being hunted or mistreated is aroused. This fact of fearlessness is the characteristic that underlies almost every face of Edenlike conditions. All of the structural

characteristics presented before contribute to it, there are walls to keep dangers out(no fear of trespassers) , doors to walk out freely(no fear of seclusion), large amounts of food (no hunger), good weather (no cold), a lot of waters (no thirst or heat), no time for sickness or pain (no fear of sufferance), no hunting, no violence needed, freedom to walk away. It sounds idyllic, but in our world it happens, and if we look with the correct attitude it's what the human race has been seeking since the very dawn of man. Now it is within our reach.

Nature as a Dwelling: The only constructions that appear in the tale of Eden from the Genesis are the walls enclosing the garden. No house, no palace, no building that could be told from the rest of the natural wonderful world those high walls enclosed. To make this architectural interpretation I would first explore the subject of building with truly recyclable materials, even yearly substitutions.

In some traditional architectures roofs are changed every year, mud is spread on walls every year, it comes to be that this housings, or special kinds of building are more alive than any other, because as if shedding nails or hair they shed their protections. There are other ways of entwining buildings and nature, building green walls, or living in caves.

Another aspect of this and is related to absolute contemporary subjects is the taking energy and water from the spot where the building is raised (a building with as much similarities or ways of functioning nature like as possible)and not needing to be connected to any kind of wire or net of services, just in an aerial way. One of Eden's most relevant feature (in this case as a sum of many isolated characteristics) Its self sufficiency. [This concept and its coming to reality is actually what was sought to study in this thesis. The theme of Eden and Paradise came about when looking for the historic origin of self sufficiency at all levels in the old world. Of course the first concept described as such is Eden.](#)

Generation of Arquitecture From Them:

The Assembly of Eden, From Theory to Resorts.

How architecture is built from them. They must be used in a structural way, not as a set. Could they be substituted for other that do the same and live in an equal manner? How much things look and are like one another and which are exchangeable.

As we can see in fig.3 we have come to ten main characteristics to recreate and revive a complete experience of Eden. With this "Eden" clock we can find out the quantity of Eden present in a particular place that exists or how to apply these characteristics in a project ex-novo. Each characteristic counts a 10%, and none should be missing. The outer circle represents the obligatory conditions of tropic environmentally speaking, being these achieved by being this location exclusively in the tropics and needing just light roofing for the project, or being the locations in a continental climate and needing of a transparent glass or plastic shell in order to achieve these mild conditions. Inside the schemes some images of examples are shown. This parameters are very general, but able to develop many accurate leads to generate a true model of the coming to life of the archetype of Eden,

buried in our collective unconscious and able to give us the keys to paradise

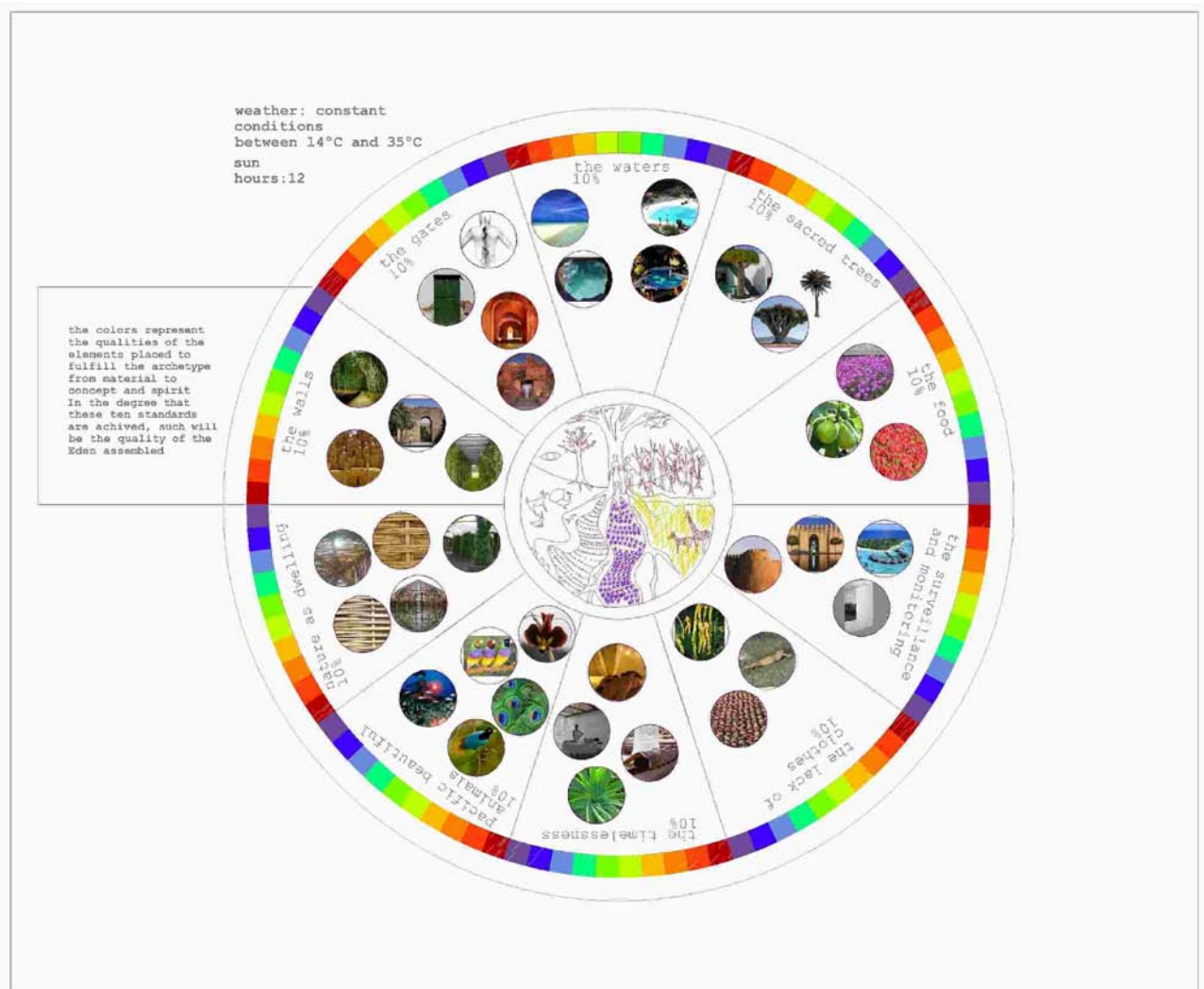


Fig. 3

Actually this structural need comes from the observation in touristic developments all around the world of building things that “appear” to be something, and are, instead, another. This thing that is nowadays found and still projected and payed for, is sought to be, if not stopped, at least thought about with this paper and thesis, because the concepts that are dealt with here are important enough by themselves to be covered with shack make ups, or fake stone.

The Tropics and Paradise:

Edenic tropicality, artificial and implicit nature; the greenhouse, the “eternal” conditions of light, humidity and heat. How is inside and out, mechanisms of exploitation of tropics, and of transforming continental conditions into tropics. What results of transforming a simple “ambiance or space” into paradise. What ways are there to exteriorize the inside and of exteriorizing outside and the relationship between this concept and the elements of Eden, the real and the fake.

The characteristic of tropics in Eden, and the necessity of it, and what are the ways to recreate it, and or the way of tropicalizing the continental

The relation of tropics with Eden comes from the perceptions of three phenomena. The first is the lack of time. When Adam is in Eden, it's a moment of timelessness as we have established beforehand. This timelessness leads us to the idea, in the tale of Eden of an eternal spring, or mild summer. This is important for holidays and for tourists. They need to know that every day spent in Eden will be lovely.

Lack of rain

As said before, no way of precipitation had yet started, the water came from the earth, in the form of four rivers and of a warm mist that apparently even brought up the temperatures. This description could also be made of a very big greenhouse, or if we have the facility of a warm climate maybe some sort of light roofing, or transparent roofing with no walls (we have the walls of Eden, and no need for more, for we have 24 hour surveillance)

Timelessness has another important consequence. There is no timetable to follow because, there is nowhere to go, no chore to be completed. No meetings to be held. This lack of enthusiasm for work, as well as of clothing is a not positively seen exteriorly characteristic of Caribbean islands for example, or of Caribbean beach towns that are far from industrial centers. It's not very good for development but very appropriate for vacations.

In order to recreate Eden, it appears of course to be easier to do it in a tropical environment. Climate helps to fulfill the requirements of lack of clothing, constant warm temperature, evergreenness, and timeless sensation. To do this in a continental climate has other conditions and other ways to fulfill this environmental needs, that here we will enumerate. Not all Adams and Eves can or need to go to Eden for long terms of time, or to far away places. A structural concept in modern travelling and brochures is that this well being needs to be found also near to where we live.

The hot house:

1_ Glass: the disappearing divisions between in and out.

Since the invention of the hothouse in the orangerie of Versailles, the cristallike spaces have had a long span journey, from the greenhouse to the office building. This transition serves well the purpose of edenizing all sorts of conditions. It may seem that the changing paradigm of closing of spaces is a sideways consequence of development and investigation. But actually in order to generate spaces where the space and the idea of the space involved are equally important, glass closings and all the architectonic consequences they bring about are a major tool and resource for the architecture of the multisensorial reconstruction. Contemporary glass fulfills environmental requirements of isolation, shade, light, acoustics, and international standards regarding fire, security etc. With glass and serigraphies, curtains, shades, many lighting and depth effects can be accomplished, and in the correct exterior spaces, the frontier between outside and the inside can be erased, at least inside the minds and hearts of the final users of the facilities here proposed.

2_ Glass: the natural heat and light.

In continental conditions there is a bigger need for light. Glass and some kinds of plastic not only generate a green house effect, thus heating in a passive non energetic way as well as letting through bigger amounts of light.

When the time of year comes, that the sun is higher, with simple mechanic movements like pulling down curtains and opening windows, we achieve again a perfectly mild temperature.

With the correct artificial lighting, the conditions of 12 hours of daylight can be easily achieved even in continental climates. If we take the energy needed to keep these lights on from sun and wind we would then have a conceptual accordance, it all comes from nature (above). The human intervention needed to generate and put to work this enhancement of the elements is another purpose of this paper and of this method.

Conclusions:

In order to eliminate fake and make up from the building of facilities for spending holidays there's a need to understand where the concepts that are so easy, familiar and general in vacationing and well being come from. From the results that are coming out of the thesis that I'm developing, this is the main source. The archetype of Eden, and the objects, elements and characteristics that emerge from it. The idea is simple and clear but the implications derived from the results of the study are, in the first the need to understand that with simple elements put together an architecture for tourism can be developed that fulfills every need to complete the multidimensional experience of Eden, and it's not a movie set, but a self sustained living system.

References

-LA SANTA BIBLIA, Antiguo y Nuevo Testamento, Miami Florida, Editorial Vida 1978, Antigua Versión de Capsiodoro de la Reina (1569), Revisada por Cipriano de Valera (1602), Otras revisiones: 1862, 1909 y 1960

-EL CORAN, Edición preparada por Julio Cortes, Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1984

-C. G. Jung, El Hombre y sus símbolos 1995

Azara, Pedro: LA RECONSTRUCCIÓN DEL EDÉN, Mito y arquitectura en Oriente, Barcelona Editorial Gustavo Gili S.L. Barcelona, 2010

Scafi, Alessandro: MAPPING PARADISE, A History of Heaven on Earth, Hong Kong, South Sea International Press. First published in 2006 by the British Library, London

Wilber, Ken: UP FROM EDEN, 1981, Edición Española "DESPUES DEL EDÉN" Editorial Kairos S.A. Barcelona . 1995.

